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TEACHERS' AND PARENTS'

ASSISTANT;

OR,

THIRTEEN LESSONS

CONVEYING TO UNINFORMED MINDS THE FIRST IDEAS OF

GOD AND HIS ATTRIBUTES.

.

BY AN AMERICAN JEWESS.

PHILADELPHIA:

C. SHERMAN, PRINTER.

5605.

INTRODUCTION.

THREE years ago I had the pleasure of introducing to our community a fellow labourer of rare excellence, who claimed the privilege of contributing the efforts of her well-stored mind to enrich our religious literature. The introduction of Miss Aguilar was favourably received, and her name has become familiar to all enlightened Israelites of America, as one who is able to do service to our good cause. I am therefore the more emboldened to introduce a new associate in our confederacy ; but this time it is a lady who has drawn her first breath in America, and who is, despite of the absence of a European education, imbued with high thought and deep reflection. All she claims is, to be admitted in the ranks of those who defend and expound the immutable principles on which Judaism is founded, and sure we are that the many who have regarded my own efforts with kindness, will not withhold from my valued friend their meed of approbation. It is no easy task to think for a child, to make him feel the cogency of the truths which are to govern his life ; hence the number of works calculated to elicit thought, and so to say, enkindle reason within the human soul at an early period, is exceedingly limited. I therefore hail with great satisfaction this small guide which I now offer to the public, as it is the very thing

needed to make the parent or teacher think, and gives to the intelligent child the means of gradually entering into the task of developing his own ideas, and to imprint the important truth of religion indelibly on his soul. And let the reader, especially if she be a mother, not neglect to improve by the lesson thus conveyed, and endeavour to instil it into the spirit of her laughing boy, when he is gradually led to look up from nature to nature's God.

Perhaps it may be thought, and this with the best reason, that the present offering requires no introduction; but as the American Jewess is desirous of remaining unknown, and to do good without having the public gaze directed to herself, I deemed it but just, as she has intrusted me with her manuscript, to let a responsible name usher her first work before the public, little doubting, that if encouraged she will before long continue the work so well begun, with a gradual developement of the revealed truths of Scripture, the point where her thirteen lessons terminate.

ISAAC LEESER.

PHILADELPHIA, April 8th, 5605.

TO THE PUBLIC.

THIS little book has been written expressly for the benefit of the rising generation of Israel, by assisting mothers and teachers in the duty of imparting to their minds the first ideas of the Deity. As, however, it contains nothing *national*, and is only designed to inculcate those first grand truths, in the contemplation of which all sects and denominations melt down into one great mass of God-adoring believers, it is hoped that in this liberal and enlightened age and country, the mere fact of its having been composed by a Jewess, for the instruction of Jewish children, will not cause it, if otherwise approved, to be rejected by the Christian community. The writer would gladly feel it in her power to discharge ever so small a fraction of the debt of gratitude that her nation is under to Christian writers.

ADDRESS TO TEACHERS.

THE writer of this little book earnestly begs those who may make use of it to remember that it is intended to be used *exclusively* by the Teacher. The design in the arrangement, &c., will be entirely defeated if the book be put into the hands of children, either to commit any portion of it to memory, or even to be read aloud to a teacher. The instruction it contains is intended to be conveyed *orally*, as if proceeding immediately from the mind of the teacher; and the author flatters herself that she has so arranged it as to enable the most unpractised teacher, with the aid of a little preparation and an occasional reference to the book, during the lesson, to accomplish this. Some experience in the interesting task of conveying knowledge to uninformed minds has convinced her that the grand secret of instruction is, not to think for the child, but to make him think for himself; not so much to impart ready-formed ideas, as to enable the child to awaken those that lie dormant in his own mind.

TEACHERS' AND PARENTS' ASSISTANT.

LESSON I.

THE FIRST IDEA OF GOD.

Do you know who God is?

Probably no answer from the child, but a downcast or confused look. After a pause proceed to the next question.

Do you know who made the bright warm sun, and the lovely moon and the shining stars?

The teacher, after giving the child time to think upon this, may, if no answer be made, answer for him:

God.

Can you tell me how we know that God made these things?

Let the child think, but expect no answer. Continue to question:

Could they have made themselves? Could any *man* have made them?

The child will unhesitatingly answer "No," to both these questions.

Then you see that some being, more powerful than the most powerful man, must have made them, and that Great Being is GOD.

Can you mention to me some other things that could not have made themselves, and that no *man* could have made?

Assist the child here, after having given him time to reflect, by reminding him of some of the various familiar objects of creation; as the trees, the flowers, different animals, &c.

You know that all the things we have just mentioned, live upon the earth. Now did the earth make itself? Could any *man* have made it?

The child will of course answer correctly.

Who then must have made the earth?
God.

You have now found out that God made the sun, moon and stars, the earth, and all the things and animals that live and grow upon it. Now can you answer my first question, and tell me who God is?

The child will not now require much assistance to answer :

God is the Maker of all that is in the heavens, of the earth and of every thing that belongs to the earth.

LESSON II.

OF GOD AS THE CREATOR.

What did God make all that we see in the skies, the earth, and all that we see on the earth, out of?

Let the teacher answer, after giving the child time to think :

God is so great and so powerful that He made all these wonderful things out of nothing. No child and no man can think how great He is.

There is a word which means to make something where before there was nothing.

This word is "to create." Now tell me the meaning of "to create."

After the child has answered as well as he can, let the teacher say :

It means, to make something, where before there was nothing. God *created* all his works, because He made them at first out of nothing. What is God called because He made all things out of nothing?

Let the child think for a moment, and then let the teacher answer for him :

He is called the Creator.

Now tell me the meaning of Creator.

After the child has given such a definition as he is capable of, let the teacher say :

Creator means one who has made something, where before there was nothing. Who is the only Being who can make something out of nothing ?

The child will readily answer,

God.

God then, you see, is the Creator.

LESSON III.

OF THE WORK OF THE CREATION AS HAVING BEEN

COMPLETED IN THE BEGINNING.

Does God go on *creating* all things that we see, or making them out of nothing ?

Let the child think, but do not expect a correct answer.

No. God has made all things that live and grow in such a way that they themselves can give birth to, or cause to live and grow, other things, like themselves. Where you see a flower, you cannot think that God created, or made out of nothing, that very flower that you are looking at, because you know that it came

from a seed planted in the ground, that sprouted and came up and became a pretty plant with leaves upon it, and then that this flower bloomed upon it. If this flower had not been taken from the plant, after it had bloomed for some time, all the pretty part would have fallen off, and left only the hard part at the bottom of the flower upon the plant.

Can you tell me what you would find in this hard part of the flower?

See if the child can answer, before assisting him.

You would find seeds in this hard part; and when these seeds were ripe, if you were to plant them, they would come up and grow, and produce another flower, exactly like the one you were looking at.

But whence did the seed come from which *this* flower grew?

Let the child answer as well as he can.

You know it grew in the flower of another plant of the same kind, that grew from another seed.

But before there was any plant of this kind which could bear a flower with seed in the bottom of it, where did the very first one come from?

After letting the child give such an answer as he is capable of, continue—

God *created* the first one, or made it out of nothing, and by his wonderful wisdom and power He made it in such a way as to have within itself the means of causing to live and grow other plants of the same kind, so that He only had to *create* the first one. And so it is with all the plants and trees that are in the world.

Here let the child mention other instances in the vegetable kingdom. Remind him how all the fruit that he eats contains within it seed that will produce trees or plants bearing other fruits of the same kind, with seed in them—carry his thoughts back to the infancy of the trees upon which these fruits grew, and so on, till he is led again to the creation.

LESSON IV.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

Are fowls and birds and fishes and insects produced or made to live and grow in the same way that trees and plants are?

Give the child time to reflect, and act as if you expected an answer, which however he will not probably be able to give correctly.

You know when you look at a grown hen, that once it was a little chicken, and that this little chicken came from an egg that was laid by another hen like the one you are looking at, and that this hen came in the same way from another egg and so on ; so you know that God did not *create* the very hen that you are looking at, *or make it out of nothing*. But how was it at the time when there was no egg for the first hen to come from ?

Let the child give such an answer as he may, before assisting him.

God *created* the first hen, as he did the first of all trees and plants, or made it out of nothing, in such a way as to cause it to lay eggs, out of which little chickens would come and grow up and lay other eggs, and so on for ever, so that God only had to *create* the first hen.

Let the child here mention other oviparous animals, and without fatiguing him, carry his thoughts into the various departments of this portion of the animal kingdom, retracing them, as he has already done the hen, to the creation.

Now you know that men make a great many curious and wonderful things : a watch, for instance, that seems to go almost as if it had life ; but do you think that any man could

make a watch that would be able, before it was worn out, to produce another watch, and that this watch would again produce others, so that all the trouble of making any more watches would be saved?

No! You know that no man could do this, and you see how much more wonderful and curious all God's works are, than the most wonderful and curious thing that man can make.

LESSON V.

SAME SUBJECT, CONCLUDED.

There are a great many animals, as horses, cows, dogs, &c., that have young ones without laying eggs. All the cows you see, for instance, were once little calves, who were born of other cows, so you cannot think when you look at a cow, that God created or made that cow out of nothing, although you know that it did not come from an egg as the hen did. But how was it when there was no cow to have the first little calf, that was to grow up and have other little calves?

If the child be allowed to think, he will probably be able to answer this question.

God created the first cow, or made it out of

nothing, and created it in such a way as to cause it to give birth to little calves, which should grow up and have other little calves, and so on for ever, so that God only had to *create* the first cow.

Here let the child mention other animals which produce their young without laying eggs, and again lead his thoughts back to their first creation.

You are the child of your mother. There was a time when your mother was a little baby born of her mother, and her mother again was the little baby of another woman, who had also been the little baby of another, and so on. But there must have been a time when there was no mother to have little boys and girls to grow up and be men and women. Now where did the first man and woman come from, to be the father and mother of children who should grow up and be the fathers and mothers of other children, and so on till the whole earth should be filled with people?

God *created* the first man and woman, and caused them to become the first father and mother of all the people who are living, or who have ever lived, or who ever will live upon the earth.

Now you have learned that there was a

time when there was no sun, no moon, no stars, no earth, no plants, no animals, no men, and that it pleased the great God to make all these things out of nothing. Can you tell me what the making of all things out of nothing is called?

The child cannot be expected to answer this question correctly, still let him think, before answering for him.

It is called the *Creation*, because, as you have learned, the word *create* means to make something, where before there was nothing. The *Creation* then is the time when all things were made; and the *Creator* is God, the great Being who made all things, where before there was nothing.

LESSON VI.

OF GOD AS THE ALMIGHTY.

Do you know what might is?

Require the child to think and give some answer before explaining.

Might means strength and power, and *mighty* means great, strong and powerful.

There are many animals which have a great deal of might. A horse, you know, is very

strong and powerful, so a horse has a great deal of might. An elephant is more powerful, and can do a great deal more than a horse can, so that an elephant is more *mighty* than a horse. But the great God who first created the elephant and the horse, is more mighty still than they are. He is so powerful, so mighty that He can do *all* things; nothing is impossible for Him to do, nothing is even hard for Him to do, or He could not have created the horse and the elephant and the great sun, and all things out of nothing. As God is mighty enough then to do *all* things, He is called The ALMIGHTY.

Now tell me the meaning of mighty.

Let the child recall the answer that has been already given.

Now tell me the meaning of almighty.

Insist upon an answer before proceeding.

Almighty means able to do all things.

Who is the only Being who is able to do all things?

The child will readily answer :

God.

Now tell me why God is called the Almighty?

Give the child time to answer before assisting him.

Because He is the only Being who is able to do all things.

What other name have you learned for God?

Give the child time and some little assistance, and he will probably answer correctly :

God is called the Creator, because He made all things out of nothing.

Yes, and as God is the Creator, we know that He is Almighty, for none but an almighty Being could have been the Creator of the world.

LESSON VII.

OF SPACE AS INTRODUCING THE IDEA OF INFINITY.

Do you know what space is?

The child will of course answer, "No."

I will tell you. Space is room. Instead of saying I have not room to walk or stand in, you might say I have not space enough to walk or to stand in. All that is shut in by the four walls of this room, and between the

floor and the ceiling is space. Is this space empty?

Let the child think and answer as he may before proceeding.

No, because there are persons, and furniture, and things of different kinds in this space.

Is any part of this space empty?

Again let the child think and answer before proceeding.

Yes, all the upper part that is above our reach is empty.

You know that if all the walls that divide this house into rooms were taken away, and only the outer walls and the roof were to be left, and we were to continue sitting where we are, the space about us would be much larger than it now is, but it would not be as large as it *might* be, for the floor, walls and roof of the house would confine it.

Now how could you make this space much larger.

With a little encouragement the child will probably be able to answer :

By taking away the outer walls and roof of the house.

Yes, then we should be out of doors, and

what would confine or stop our space then, and prevent it from being as large as it might be?

Again require such an answer of the child as he may be able to give, before proceeding.

The ground under us, and the houses about us.

Well, suppose you were to go out of town, where there are no houses, what would confine your space then?

Let the child think and give some answer before proceeding.

The earth and the sky would seem to stop it.

Now suppose you had wings like a bird, and were a great *great* deal stronger than any bird, so that you could fly up, up, up into the great space above you, until the earth that you had flown from would be almost out of sight, or looked not much larger than the moon looks to us, you would then be up in what we call the sky, and you would find that this sky would not stop your flight at all, for it is nothing but space.

Would it be empty space that you would see all around you?

Let the child think, and insist upon an answer, but do not expect a correct one.

No, it would not be empty space. The moon would be in this space, and the earth that you had left would be in it, though very, very far from you; and far above you, you would still see thousands of stars, that would look as if they were in another sky or heaven. Some of these stars would look a great deal larger than you ever saw them look on earth, because you would be a great deal nearer to them, and all things look smaller when you are far from them than they really are.

If you were to keep on flying through the empty part of space, till you reached the nearest of these stars, would you find yourself at the end of space, or would you find that there was more space still farther on, filled with more stars?

The child will probably without assistance, answer this correctly.

Yes, there will be more space above and all around you, still filled with thousands of stars, some as far off as the earth that you started from, and some a great, great deal farther. Suppose that you could fly to the very farthest

of these stars that you could see. Would you find yourself at the end of space then?

Let the child answer as he may, before proceeding.

No; there would still be space farther and farther yet.

Could you ever get to the end of space?

Give the child time before prompting the answer.

No; you could never get to the end of space, because space has *no end*. You would have gone farther than the most distant stars that we can see from the earth, you would see a great many stars that are too far off to be seen from the earth, you would be in what we call *the Heavens*, and you would find that the Heavens are nothing but space, filled with stars, very far from each other, and that there is no end to this space.

Who made all the stars that are in the farthest part of space that we can think of?

The child will now unhesitatingly answer:

GOD.

The word *finite* means, having an end. Is space finite?

Give the child time, and he may possibly answer correctly.

No ; space is not finite, because it has no end.

The word *in-finite* means without end—having *no* end. Can you mention to me now something that is infinite, that is, that has *no* end ?

Assist the child, if necessary, after having given him time to reflect.

Space is infinite, because there is no end to space.

LESSON VIII.

OF THE EARTH AS A FINITE BODY IN INFINITE SPACE.

Now let us come back to the earth from which we started, when we wanted to find out whether there was any end to space.

Is the earth finite or *in-finite* ?

Let the child think and give such an answer as he may, then continue :

You know when you thought of flying up from the earth into the space above you, you found that you could fly for ever, and for ever,

and for ever, and that you could never get to the end of space. Thus you found out that space is infinite or has no end.

Now suppose that instead of flying up like a bird from the earth, you had the power, like the little animal called the mole, to burrow down into the earth. You must have a great deal more strength than the mole to do what I want you to do though, for I want you to burrow down, down, down into the earth, to see if you can get to the bottom or the end of it, and thus find out whether the earth is finite, that is, whether it has an end, or whether it is infinite like the space above us, and has no end. Which do you think it is?

Let the child give such an answer as he may.

You would find that the earth is finite, and that after working your way through all the clay and rocks of different kinds that the earth is made of, you would get through the earth to the other side of it, and you would find space under you filled with stars, looking just like the sky and stars that you saw above you, before you began to work your way through the earth.

Now tell me—Is the earth finite or infinite?

Let the child answer unassisted, before proceeding.

The earth is *finite*, because there is an end to the earth.

LESSON IX.

DEFINITE IDEA OF THE HEAVENS.

What is the shape of the moon ?

It is round.

Can you tell me what the shape of the earth is ?

Let the child think, though, unless he has been taught, it will of course be impossible for him to answer this question.

The earth too is round, like an orange.

Where is the moon ?

The child will probably answer—

In the sky or in the heavens.

What did you find out, in a former lesson, that the sky is ?

Let the child think before continuing.

You found out that the sky is nothing but space.

Now tell me where the moon is ?

The child, after a little thought, will now be able to answer.

The moon is in space.

Yes ; there is space between the moon and us, and there is space between the moon and the stars that are farther off than the moon is. There is space all round the moon, and the moon is always moving about in space.

Now can you tell me where the earth is ?

The child can hardly be expected to answer this question, still seem to expect an answer before proceeding.

The earth too is in space. It is a great round ball, always moving about in the space that is all around it. If you were in the moon, and were to look at the earth, the earth would look to you then, exactly as the moon looks to you now that you are on the earth, only it would look like a larger moon, because the earth is larger than the moon, and it would seem to be in the sky with the stars. So you see that the earth is just as much in the sky or heavens as the moon and stars are, because the heavens are nothing but space, and the earth and the moon and the stars are all great balls moving about in infinite space.

The sun too is in the sky or heavens, that is, the sun is in space. There is space between the sun and the earth, and there is space beyond and all around the sun. Space is infinite, but the sun, though very large, larger than you can think of its being, is *finite*, because there is an end to the sun. It is not every where, as space is.

If you were to blow some soap bubbles, and throw them up into the empty space in the upper part of this room, they would be in the space in this room, exactly like the sun, moon, earth, and stars are in the infinite space that we see about us, when we are out of doors. God, when he made these tremendous bodies, gave them the power of always moving about in the same parts of space, and of always keeping at the same distances from each other, so that they would never come against each other in their movements, as the soap bubbles might do, and break each other.

The teacher, if she thinks proper, may readily enlarge upon this illustration, and by the idea of the soap bubbles give the child an idea of the solar system, supposing him to have the power of making one large bubble to be stationary in the space in the room, and letting this represent the sun; and of making seven other bubbles move round it, at different distances, which would represent the planets.

LESSON X.

OF GOD AS AN INFINITE BEING.

You have now learned that God is the Creator, because He made all that is in space, and all that is on the earth out of nothing. You have not learned all that God has created, nor can any one learn it all as long as he lives, because God's works are so wonderful, and their number is so great. We can learn a great deal about what God has made upon the earth, and we can learn something about the sun, moon and stars; about their size and distances and motions; but we do not know, nor can we ever learn what things and animals grow and live in these far off worlds.

You have learned that God is the Almighty, because He is able to do all things. You have learned too that space is infinite, because there is no end to space, for you cannot think of going to a place so far off, that there will not be more space farther off still.

Now you are going to learn that the great God too is infinite. As infinite as space is;

for God too is every where, and there is no part of infinite space where God is not.

Let me ask you now, where is God ?

Let the child think and answer as he may, then continue :

God, you hear people say, is in Heaven. What is Heaven ? It is infinite space. The earth too is in the heavens, because the earth is in space. God then is every where. He fills all space. He is about the earth, and all around the earth, just as space is. He is about the sun, about the most distant stars that he has made, just as space is. God is INFINITE—He is here—He is there—He is every where. There is no place where God is not.

LESSON XI.

OF GOD AS THE ETERNAL.

There was a time, you may easily think, when there was nothing in infinite space, but the Infinite God. Before God created all things, there was nothing. But let me ask

you, was there ever a time when there was no God ?

Let the child think and answer as he may, before proceeding.

Could there be any being greater than the Infinite, Almighty God, who could have created this Infinite and Almighty God ?

Pause, for the child to think and answer, before proceeding.

No ; God was never born ; He was never created. God always was. There was never, never, *never* a time when God was not. There was no *beginning* of God. He always, always was, just as He now is. He always, always will be just as He now is—Almighty and Infinite. He had no beginning, and will have no end.

There is a word which means without beginning and without end. This word is *eternal*. Now tell me the meaning of *eternal*.

Give the child time to answer.

It means without beginning and without end.

Are men and women eternal ?

Give the child time to think before prompting the answer.

No. Men and women are born and they die. They have a beginning and an end. They are not eternal.

Who is the only eternal Being?

The child will readily answer:

God.

Why is God eternal?

The child will probably answer without assistance.

Because He had no beginning and will have no end.

Yes; and because God is the *only* Being without beginning and without end, He is called THE ETERNAL.

LESSON XII.

OF GOD AS A PURE SPIRIT.

Look at me now, and think well of what I am going to ask you.

Can you see that part of me that *thinks*, that feels glad or sorry, pleased or displeased?

Proceed without waiting for an answer.

You may be able when you look at my countenance to tell whether I am glad or sorry, pleased or displeased ; but can you see that which makes my countenance look so ?

Let the child think and answer as he may.

You can see that part of me that speaks and sees and hears ; that eats and moves—but can you see my thoughts before I speak them ?

That part of me that you can see is my *body* ; and that part of me which thinks and reasons, which can understand what is meant by the words infinite and eternal ; that part of me which can understand what *God* is, is my soul or spirit, and this you cannot see. Even if you should take my body all to pieces to look for it, you could not find it. Yet you know that it is in me. The spirit cannot be seen by the eyes of the body. It can only be perceived by a spirit like itself. It is your spirit which makes you know that I have a spirit, just as it is your eyes which make you know that I have a body.

Now you have learned that God is every where. He is every where on earth, and He is every where in space, or Heaven. Yet we cannot see Him.

Can you now tell me why we cannot see God?

Insist upon the child's thinking and giving an answer of his own, before proceeding.

Because God is a spirit, and we cannot see a spirit with our eyes, nor feel a spirit with our hands.

We are spirits with bodies. God is a spirit without any body. He is the eternal and infinite Spirit, who lives through all time, and who fills all space. It is our spirit that makes us know of this great Spirit. Our bodies, that make us know by seeing and feeling, &c., that God's *works*, the sun, the trees, the flowers, the air, &c., are all about us, would never make us know any thing of God. It is our *spirit* that makes us know of the great Spirit—God. We are like God, because we are spirits; but we are *un*-like God, because our spirits are shut up in our bodies, and God has *no* body. He is all spirit, and his spirit fills all space.

LESSON XIII.

RECAPITULATION OF THE PRECEDING SUBJECTS, AND
INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF REVELATION.

What have you learned about God ?

Let the child enumerate the different attributes of the Deity, which have been made known to him in all the preceding lessons, and then sum them up for him as follows :

You have learned that God is The CREATOR, because He made all things, where before there was nothing but empty space ; that He is The ALMIGHTY, because He alone has the might or power to do all things : that he is INFINITE or filling all space ; that He is ETERNAL, because He is without beginning and without end ; as He has lived through all the time that is passed, and will live through all the time that is to come.

You have learned too that God is a PURE SPIRIT, having no form or body. You have still to learn that this Almighty, Infinite, and Eternal Spirit knows us and loves us. That He did not make us and then leave us to take

care of ourselves, but that He sees us and takes care of us, though we cannot see Him.

He has told us that we must love Him, and He has given us many other commandments. If we want to feel his love, and to become good and happy, we have only to learn and to obey these commandments. All that God has made known to men about Himself, is written in the Holy Bible. It is in that that you will learn to know God.

THE END.

